

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

March/April 2008



Member Profile: Bruce Robinson

Volume 46 Number 2



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VOLUME 46, NUMBER 2

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Please address all membership fees and change of address requests to P.O. Box 541, Lima, N.Y. 14485. 1-800-836-3566. Cost of family membership/subscription is \$35.

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www.nyfoa.org

COVER: Bruce Robinson, with wife JoAnn and son Bruce, during an 11km mountain hike in the Warrumbungles, New South Wales, Australia. For member profile, turn to page 21. Photo courtesy Bruce Robinson.

From The Executive Director

It was wonderful to see so many NYFOA members at our Annual Meeting on February 23; and to visit with you at the workshops in the DEC Log Cabin. I was delighted with folks' enthusiasm for learning about their forest lands. While hearing about invasives species impacts to our forests is never good news, somehow when we're together with other landowners news like this is a little less intimidating. And when we hear it from State Extension Forester Peter Smallidge and learn that there are strategies to eradicate pests or reduce their spread, and things that forest owners can be doing, the news gets less scary. And then, when we hear from John Sullivan who with other NYFOA members and partners



in the Council of Forest Resource Organizations is advocating in Albany for programs that will address invasives, the news gets better still.

At our annual meeting, two new board members were elected - Ed Neuhauser from Groton and Marilyn Wyman from Catskill. Ed's goal as a member of the NYFOA board is to get members excited about their forest resource and help them explore ways in which this resource can be enjoyed. Marilyn has made a career around natural resource education most recently through her work with Cornell Cooperative Extension to develop the Agroforestry Resource Center in Greene County. Dan Cleveland from Erin and Gene Reinshagen from Painted Post were re-elected to three-year terms on the board. Mike Birmingham joined the board as the new Capitol District Chapter delegate. Cindy King's and Kelly Smallidge's terms as members of the board expired; and their service to the organization, along with that

of out-going President Alan White, was recognized with NYFOA Outstanding Service Awards.

During the NYFOA board meeting that followed the annual meeting, officers were elected - Dan Cleveland President, Mike Seager Vice President, John Sullivan Secretary, and Steve Teuscher Treasurer.

Please share this magazine with a neighbor and urge them to join NYFOA. By gaining more members, NYFOA's voice will become stronger!

Congratulations to all of the recipients of chapter awards named at the meeting. The May June edition of the *Forest Owner* will feature details on their accomplishments. Gary Goff Master Forest Owner Program Director was presented with the Heiberg Memorial Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to forestry and conservation.

I enjoyed attending the Southern Finger Lakes Chapter's winter workshop in Van Etten this winter; and encourage everyone to get out to one of the great events that other NYFOA chapters are helping to plan and promote in the next few months. Some of these include the Rural Landowners Workshop in Yorkshire March 8, a roundtable discussion on recreation on forested lands in Lake Placid April 1, and the North Country Sustainable Energy Fair in Canton April 25-27. Find links to these events and learn about other things happening around the state this spring on www.nyfoa.org.

-Mary Jeanne Packer
Executive Director

The mission of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is to promote sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands in New York State. NYFOA is a not-for-profit group of landowners and others interested in the thoughtful management of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

Join! NYFOA is a not-for-profit group of NY State landowners promoting

stewardship of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations. Through local chapters and statewide activities, NYFOA helps woodland owners to become responsible stewards and interested publics to appreciate the importance of New York's forests.

Join NYFOA today and begin to receive its many benefits including: six issues of *The New York Forest Owner*, woodwalks, chapter meetings, and statewide meetings.

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NYFOA members and partners planning contents for the NYS edition of *The Place You Call Home: A Guide to Caring for Your Forest Land* with Northern Woodlands Magazine publisher Steve Long at the CCE Agroforestry Resource Center in Greene County.

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A CNY chapter woodwalk took place October 27 at Winnie Godfrey's woodlot in Orell, Oswego County. Participants visited a Turkey Vulture's nest established in a treehouse and discussed other wildlife issues while learning about various woodlot management strategies being employed there. Despite cold and rain, all enjoyed the experience. Photo by Ron Abraham.

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NYFOA SAFETY TIP

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

One of the most important safety measures you can take in the woods is to protect yourself. This personal protection starts with a hardhat, ear, eye, hand, face, leg and foot protection. All the protection works together as a unit. The main strategy with PPE is two fold: 1. it protects you from some physical hazards, (i.e., flying chips and falling branches), and 2. while wearing the appropriate PPE, it allows you to concentrate and/or focus on the actual work being done. All safety equipment is labeled by American National Standard Institute (ANSI). Basic PPE requirements:

Hardhat

- Red or Orange
- Meets ANSI standards Z89.1 (labeled inside the brim)
- Minimum 4 points of suspension
- Ratchet adjustable head strap is best

NOTE: Any modifications (drill holes), cracks, or when you push in the sides it flexes easily; it is time for a new hardhat.

Eye and Face Protection

- Safety glasses or goggle meet ANSI Standard Z87.1. Each part of the safety glasses (lens, frames, arms, side shields) will be marked Z87.1 or Z87.1+ (the + indicates it is high impact protection)
- A face shield

Hearing Protection

- Usually the ear muffs are attached to the hardhat and are designed to the appropriate ANSI levels
- Ear plugs are sufficient too. Look for the highest rating plugs, i.e., 33 db is a good start

NOTE: Chainsaws produce about 103 decibels (db)

Hand Protection

- This is not requirement unless you are handling wire rope. Gloves do help protect against abrasions, cuts, scrapes, cold and wet weather conditions.

Leg Protection

- Chaps or cut-resistant pants are mandatory when cutting with a chainsaw. Chaps and/or pants should have UL or FM rating. Chaps have straps that must be buckled and secured tightly around the leg and should extend to the top of your boots
- Cuts into the chaps and/or pants in which the fibers are pulled out require new chaps/pants

Safety Footwear

- Cut-resistant footwear should be used. Steel-toed boots are not necessary
- Logger type boots provide the proper cut protection
- High uppers help protect the ankle
- Caulked boots are good in winter time and slippery conditions

Safety tip provided by Ed Wright, President, W. J. Cox Associates, Inc.

46th Annual NYFOA Meeting

The New York Forest Owners Association held its annual membership meeting on Saturday February 23, at the New York Fairgrounds in Syracuse. The May/June edition of the *Forest Owner* will feature full details on the NYFOA Awards presented at the annual meeting.

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Forest Science Becomes Forest Practice

Reviewing practical science to help forest owners sustainably manage their woodlands

PETER SMALLIDGE

Evaluating the effect of thinning after defoliation on survival and growth of sugar maple

Article Reviewed:

Wink R. A. and D.C. Allen. 2007. The combined effects of defoliation and modified timber stand improvement on hardwoods in the Tug Hill region of New York. *Northern Journal of Applied Forestry* 24(1): 43 – 51.

Issue and Background:

Several native and invasive forest insects defoliate hardwoods in New York each year, although the extent of damage varies. Forest tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma disstria* (Hubner)) is a native insect common to the northeastern US and adjacent Canada. Forest tent caterpillars attack primarily sugar maple, but also defoliate several other species including black cherry, aspen and oak. The frequency of outbreaks varies, with generally at least 6 years between outbreaks. Multi-county or regional outbreaks may range from 3 to 6 years, but a single stand rarely suffers more than 2 consecutive years.

Severe defoliation, defined as exceeding 50% crown loss, for two or more years may result in mortality or crown dieback. The growth of surviving sugar maple also suffers during and after defoliation. Defoliation coupled with additional stressors, such as drought, other pathogens, or other disturbances, can result in significantly higher levels of mortality.

Considerable anecdotal evidence supports a negative relationship between defoliation and previous disturbance. Therefore, forest managers typically avoid harvesting during defoliation.

However some research found that well-prescribed harvesting can improve the survival of residual trees following defoliation by gypsy moths. Thus, the pattern and recommendations for forest harvesting during forest tent caterpillar outbreaks are not clear. A study that specifically and experimentally assessed the effects of harvesting during forest tent caterpillar defoliation on tree survival and growth would be useful.

Review of Wink and Allen 2007:

This study utilized the forest tent caterpillar outbreak on the Tug Hill region of New York between 1991 and 1993 to evaluate the effects of harvesting during defoliation on sugar maple mortality and growth. Two forest products companies provided access to their lands for sampling and access to forest harvesting and defoliation records. Both companies had stand-level information on the extent of defoliation. Forest stands are

management units or blocks comprised of relatively uniform forest conditions and ranging in size from a few to tens or hundreds of acres. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation provided additional information on the duration and severity of defoliation in this region.

Twenty-two forest stands within the study area were classified as defoliated if they were significantly defoliated for at least two consecutive years or undefoliated if there was little or no record of defoliation. These stands were further classified as treated if harvesting occurred between 1990 and 1992, or untreated if harvesting had not occurred since before 1982. Treatments in the forest stands were considered modifications of a classically defined “timber stand improvement” where 5 inch diameter and larger trees of undesirable species or quality are removed. The classification configuration permitted a comparison of defoliation with and without forest harvesting activity. It is important to note that harvesting was by prescription, marked and supervised by a forester, and utilized competent logging crews. Between 1994 and 1997 each of the 22 stands were sampled to estimate species composition, abundance of species, tree mortality, crown dieback and growth.

The authors found that severe defoliation by forest tent caterpillars resulted in higher levels of mortality, increased



Forest tent caterpillars (FTC), as shown here on tubing for maple sap collection, are gregarious. A native insect, the FTC can result in significant defoliation leading to mortality and crown dieback in hardwood forests.



Forest owners should work closely with their forester to determine the abundance of vulnerable trees and strategies to target these during any harvesting operations.

crown dieback, and reduced growth. This result was anticipated. However, the authors found no evidence to support concerns that harvesting during a forest tent caterpillar outbreak increased the likelihood of mortality or crown dieback.

Not only was there no evidence for a negative effect of harvesting during defoliation, the authors found generally significant and positive associations. Cumulative mortality during the study was less in the defoliated-treated stands than in the defoliated-untreated stands, although differences were not statistically significant. This pattern was consistent in a study of the removal of vulnerable oak trees following gypsy moth defoliation.

Upper canopy sugar maple trees in defoliated-treated stands had a significant reduction in crown dieback symptoms (i.e., the percentage of the crown in dieback decreased), as compared to comparable trees in defoliated-untreated stands. This may indicate that if healthy trees are left following a harvest, they have an improved capacity to recover from crown dieback.

Sugar maple trees in defoliated-treated stands had greater growth following defoliation than sugar maple in defoliated-untreated stands. The pattern of growth is consistent with the pattern of

reduced crown dieback in upper canopy maple. During the defoliation, sugar maple in the defoliated-untreated stands suffered greater growth loss than those in treated stands. Presumably the harvest treatments removed the lowest vigor and most vulnerable trees and shifted sunlight and soil resources to trees better able to respond.

Through an analysis of growth rings on sugar maple, the authors observed that the sugar maple trees present in the study areas were the result of at least two high-grading events during the mid 1800's and mid 1900's. High-grading is an unsustainable harvesting practice where the best trees are cut and lower vigor trees are retained. In fact, during the 1970's and 1980's the growth of sugar maple decreased suggesting these stands held trees of low vigor and increased vulnerability. The effects of mis-management in earlier decades and centuries predisposed the stands being studied to the stress of defoliation. Corrective harvesting practices by the current company owners improved the resilience of these forests.

Application to NY Private Forests:

Forest owners who have an objective to minimize tree mortality and crown dieback associated with forest tent cater-

pillar defoliation should proactively seek to maintain healthy and vigorous forest stands. Forest trees need to maintain a level of growth that allows the tree recover from stress. Stressors, such as insect defoliators, may eliminate current energy reserves and force a tree to utilize stored energy reserves. Sugar maple has a greater reserve than some other species, such as black cherry.

The results of the study by Wink and Allen would likely have application throughout New York, especially in stands originating after repeated high-grading and where the harvesting prescription will improve the vigor of the forest. High-grading or diameter-limit cut might well intensify mortality and crown dieback. When forest owners work with a forester to develop a management plan, the forester should identify the extent of low vigor trees and crown dieback in each stand. Prioritize those stands for improvement harvests, under careful supervision, to remove trees that have low vigor. Harvesting crews should be careful to avoid damage to root systems or stems that would provide a point of entry for pathogens.

Forest owners can request an educational copy of the original study by contacting Diana Bryant by email at dlt5@cornell.edu or by phone at (607) 255-2115.



Science Disclaimer: Scientific research is typically applied in a single area under a limited set of environmental conditions. Researchers, and the interpretation of that research, attempt to describe how different conditions might affect the application of results. The results interpreted here should be applied with due diligence by forest owners, incorporating their specific conditions into the practices described. If any questions exist, seek assistance from professionals before proceeding.

Peter J. Smallidge, NYS Extension Forester and Director, Arnot Teaching and Research Forest, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY. pjs23@cornell.edu; 116 Fernow Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853.

New York State Tree Farm News

ERIN O'NEILL

Hello, Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Erin O'Neill and I'm the new Chair of NY Tree Farm. I grew up in Chenango Forks, near Binghamton, NY and went to college in Syracuse at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. I have a Dual degree in Forest Resource Management and Wildlife Biology and I'm an SAF Certified Forester. I've been working as a Forester for Finch Paper LLC in Glens Falls, NY for 8 years and I've been involved in Tree Farm in some manner for most of that time.

I believe Tree Farm provides a valuable service to the small landowner by providing them with the tools they need to be successful on their forest. The mission of The American Tree Farm System is to put good forestry on



more acres by educating family forest owners about sustainable forestry and helping them manage *their* forests consistent with *their* goals while ensuring the environmental integrity of the forest and recognizing and rewarding these efforts and commitments. This sounds really wordy and long, but to me it simply means helping you all do what *you* want with *your* land in a responsible way.

We've been doing this in NY since 1956. The program is currently undergoing an adaptation process that will help it continue to serve and recognize the people practicing quality forest management and offer professional advice and support and NY is ready for this change. We are working harder than ever this year to try to support an informational website, to recruit more volunteers so we can reach more family forest owners and to be able to inform you of programs in your area that may be helpful to you in caring

for your forest as well as providing any programs you think are lacking. Please feel free to visit our new website at www.nytreefarm.org and let me know what you think and what you need.

Those of you who know Mike Burns will recognize that I have some large shoes to fill, but I come into this position with a lot of ideas and a lot of enthusiasm. Let the fireworks begin!

Erin O'Neill is the new Chair of the NYS Tree Farm Committee.



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Kid's Corner

REBECCA HARGRAVE



Marian and Kermit Morgan submitted this photo. It shows their grandson, Lucas Gravlin (1½ years) who is the son of Emily and Dave Gravlin. "The bracket fungus on an old maple appears to be a great resting place from which to enjoy the view of the woodlot on a sunny spring day," stated the Morgan's.

Do you have a photo of you and your kids or grandkids in your forest? If so, *The New York Forest Owner* would like to see it! Send an electronic or hard copy to *Forest Owner* editor, MaryBeth Malmsheimer, (address on page 22) and it may end up on this page!

Wildlife Tracks

Some wild animals are hard to see; they hide or sleep during the day; run away as soon as you come near; or are so quiet you never see them or hear them coming. But, there are other ways we can "see" wildlife—through what they leave behind!

Footprints, scat, and rubbings are easy things to look for in the woods, especially in the winter snow.

Footprints, or tracks, are exactly that – the marks left by animals moving through the snow. Some are easy to identify, such as deer and raccoon. Try looking for tracks in fresh snow or mud. Muddy areas next to creeks are often easy places to find

the prints of animals that come there for a drink.

Scat, is the solid waste of wildlife, and amazingly enough,

each species has unique scat. If you find a pile of poop, you can identify the animal that

created it and you may even be able to determine what it

ate! Deer scat usually looks like small round pellets; rabbit is similar but smaller. Bear scat, on the other hand, is large and log shaped, similar to a (very) large dog. Scat piles can often be seen in areas where animals feed or bed down, or in the places they travel frequently.

Only a few animals leave rubbings. Male deer rub their antlers on trees, and bears put large scratches in trunks with their claws. Their damage is obvious if you run across it. Other animals may be "seen" by looking at the distinctive bite mark they leave on branches and twigs such as with deer, rabbits, and porcupines.

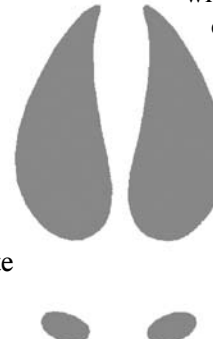
Go out and see what you can find.

- Can you find the snowslide trail left by a river otter sliding down a hill, or the stump left by a busy beaver?
- Look for three different tracks and two other animal signs.

- There are great field guides that have wildlife signs in them, or check out www.enature.com with great animal tracks and sign pictures for most of our wildlife.

You can keep track of the signs you see with photographs, or plaster casts of footprints in mud. Remember to check at different parts of the year as well; hibernating animals have interesting tracks, too. ▲

Rebecca Hargrave is the Community Horticulture and Natural Resources Educator at Cornell University Cooperative Extension in Chenango County.



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Wild Things in Your Woodlands

KRISTI SULLIVAN

SEASONAL WOODLAND POOLS



Seasonal woodland pools typically hold water during the spring and fall.



Wood frogs lay their eggs in seasonal pools in late March or early April.

In late March or early April, as longer days and warmer weather beckon you to step out into the woods, you may notice shallow pools of water. Lured by the quacking and clucking sounds of wood frogs (*Lithobates sylvatica*) calling out to potential mates as they float on the water, or the loud calls of spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*) camouflaged at the water's edge, you can't help but notice that spring has arrived. To many, woodland pools appear to be insignificant wet places in the forest, but they are actually a source of incredible abundance and diversity, and are important components of the forest ecosystem. Serving as breeding habitat for amphibian and invertebrate species, and feeding habitat for many others, they are so abundant with life that some have likened them to the 'coral reefs of the forest.'

These shallow, woodland pools, often called vernal pools, are valuable to many species of wildlife and essential for the survival of others. Typically small (< 1 acre), and isolated from streams or other bodies of water, they fill with water

during the spring and other rainy periods, but regularly or periodically dry up during the driest months of summer. The amount of time they contain water, called hydroperiod, may vary from year to year. Pools that hold standing water for at least two and one-half months in the spring are ideal because they provide adequate time for frog and salamander eggs to hatch, and their larvae to grow and leave the water. In drier seasons, these seasonal pools are easy to overlook. However, if you keep an eye open, there are certain telltale signs that indicate water is present during at least part of the year. Look for topographic depressions in the forest floor with compacted leaves, covered lightly with sediment and darkened by water stains. You can also look for wetland plants, such as sphagnum moss, sensitive fern, sedges, and some wetland shrubs growing in a depression.

Many species of wildlife may benefit from the presence of these woodland pools. Invertebrates like dragonflies, damselflies, and water boatman find refuge in the water. Reptiles like the spot-

ted turtle (*Clemys guttata*) and Blandings turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) travel to woodland pools in the spring to feed and mate. Garter snakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) and ribbon snakes (*Thamnophis sauritus*) prey on young frogs as they emerge from the water, and water snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*) feed on tadpoles, adult frogs, and salamanders. Mammals, including shrews, mice, skunks and raccoons, also feed on the many invertebrates and amphibians found in or near the water. Wild turkeys may stop at pools to feed on insects, and songbirds nest in lush vegetation nearby. Some amphibians, such as the spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*), Jefferson salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*), marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*), wood frog, and others, have adapted to these habitats. Although these species live in the forest for most of the year, they depend on the water to breed and lay eggs, and for their larvae to grow and develop. Shallow pools that dry up periodically cannot support fish, which are major predators of wood frog eggs, and frog and salamander

larvae. With recent increasing concerns about amphibian health and population declines, the role of these valuable forest refuges has gained increased attention.

If you suspect you have a seasonal woodland pool on your forestland, you can take steps to protect this valuable habitat and associated wildlife. Any activity that changes the amount of water a pool holds may also affect the length of time a pool holds water and its suitability as habitat for the animals that live there. Draining or diverting water from entering a pool has obvious negative consequences. However, deepening a pool so it can hold water longer may also change the suitability of the habitat for wildlife. A pool that holds water on a semi-permanent or permanent basis allows for fish and some larger invertebrate predators to survive and presence of these predators can change the biological community. In addition to the quantity of water that a pool holds, the quality of water that enters the pool is also important. Take care not to divert polluted runoff containing sediment or chemicals into woodland pools. Within the pool, avoid disturbance of the pool depression even during times when there is no standing water. This includes driving recreational vehicles or heavy equipment through the pool depression,


or piling sediment or other debris in or near the pool.

The surrounding forests are just as important as the pools themselves. Many animals depend on woodland pools to complete just part of their life cycle. For example, wood frogs and spotted salamanders visit the pools in the springtime for a few short weeks to breed and lay their eggs. Once they deposit their eggs, they move out into the surrounding forest where they feed, grow, and find cover for the remainder of the year. Amphibians are generally very prone to drying out and to temperature extremes. Areas with deep leaf litter, abundant coarse woody debris (logs and branches), and patches of shade provide these animals with the opportunity to move across the forest floor and find suitable cover from the elements. Pool-breeding salamanders readily travel 130 yards or more from breeding pools, while juvenile wood frogs may disperse over half a mile.

While protecting woodland pools does not prohibit active forest management in the vicinity, you can take steps to protect the values of the surrounding forest for woodland pool dependent species. Encourage a mostly closed canopy ($\geq 75\%$) in a pole or greater size class to provide shade, leaf litter, and woody debris within 30 yards of the edge of the pool. Avoid creating ruts, exposing mineral soil, or creating any sources of erosion

or sedimentation. From 30 to 130 yards from the pool's edge, encourage a closed or partially closed canopy ($\geq 50\%$) and minimize disturbance whenever possible. When other objectives prevent you from being able to protect a buffer around the entire pool, focus on maintaining a forested connection between or among clusters of pools, or between pools and large expanses of forest.

By taking a proactive approach to locate and protect woodland pools on your property, you can conserve these extremely valuable habitats and the animals that live there. You too, can benefit by visiting these pools in the spring, summer, or fall. Alive with jelly-like egg masses, tadpoles, aquatic insects, salamanders and frogs, vernal pools can provide endless hours of adventure and hands-on exploration for children and adults alike.

If you would like to learn more about woodland pools, or become a Woodland Pool Steward by helping to document locations of woodland pools on your land or in your community, visit the Woodland Pool Steward website at www.woodland-pools.info. 

Kristi Sullivan coordinates the Conservation Education Program at Cornell's Arnot Forest. More information on managing habitat for wildlife, as well as upcoming educational programs at the Arnot Forest can be found by visiting the Arnot Conservation Education Program web site at www.dnr.cornell.edu/arnot/acep/

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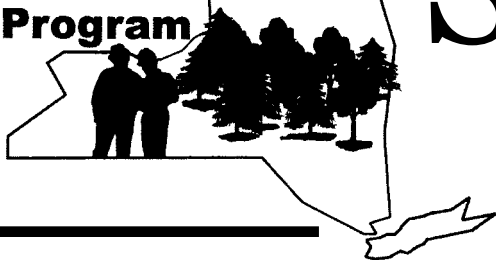
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NY Master Forest Owner/COVERTS Program



Stories from the Woods

KELLY SMALLIDGE

The goal of the MFO/COVERTS Program is to provide private forest owners with the information and encouragement necessary to manage their forests to enhance ownership satisfaction.

Forest Owner Visits are Uniquely Different, Yet Surprisingly the Same!

Since completing my MFO training, it is interesting to note that each of my few woods walks has had a different introduction and different "conclusion." In all cases, I learned a lot, met great people and witnessed the undeniable pride forest owners have in their woodlots. I will share some of the highlights from the lessons I have learned, and it might surprise you that those lessons have less to do with the trees and woodlots than they do with the people who care for them.

I was called for my first visit the November after I finished the training program. When I met the landowner, I learned plenty, including the fact that this landowner was challenged (and determined) to identify "who" in NYS could help him start "managing" his 25 acres on the east shore of Cayuga Lake. This puzzled me. He said it took weeks of phone calling to Cooperative Extension, DEC, and back to his former home state of New Hampshire (where they have a similar program) to learn of NY's MFO program.

I shared this story of trial and tribulation with the State Extension Forester, the Extension Educator who referred the land owner to me, and with Gary Goff. As much as they need to hear from us about

the outcomes of our visits, they appreciate hearing about these sorts of things, too.

So...the woodlot. It was a blustery November day; overcast, windy and promising rain. The 25 acres sloping toward Cayuga Lake, with 3 small ravines (gorges) is covered with hemlock, locust, some ash, oak and maple. But more importantly to the owner, scattered among these stands are the memories of years of family camping excursions...crackling campfires, precisely poised tent sites, and the fragrance of the woods mixing with the lake mist, and echoes of chil-

dren laughing. He had owned it 50 years. It is more than a woodlot, it is a special place.

Several months later my next visit occurred. I knew it would be a quick walk on 5 acres, so I went to the property directly from the YMCA, in shorts and t-shirt. We started walking through a wet area into brambles and nettles, and before long I realized there was no turning back, literally. Meanwhile, visions of goats munching lazily on these plants flashed through my mind. This made it easier not to focus on how raw my legs were.

We finally emerged from the



The species diversity of grasses and forbs in this old field provides ideal habitat for many grassland birds.

thicket and were able to get a better look at the trees. There was no survey, so we were relying on a tax map. When I looked more closely at it, I realized we had been looking at the neighbor's trees while casually strolling IN the neighbor's woodlot. We sheepishly scampered back to their property. The remainder of the property was mostly overgrown field. Again, goats popped into my head.

I asked how she heard about the MFO program and she explained a relative in another part of the state had met with a MFO volunteer there. They were so pleased with the outcome of that visit, they recommended that she contact a local MFO.

It would be spring before I received my third call. By now I was armed with the courage to say "I don't know, but I will find out." It was a good thing, because not only was this landowner prepared to get to work, he was also very knowledgeable. Not surprisingly, now he is a MFO volunteer too.

That fall was my next referral. After several attempts to schedule the visit (fairly typical), it finally happened. The 40-acre property was once dominated by maple, but since the last logging operation (about 12 years ago) beech had ample opportunity to exploit the abundant sunlight that was flooding the forest floor. Of course, beech isn't necessarily "bad," but for a forest owner who is interested in encouraging and preserving diversity in the landscape, it is not a welcome sight.

As usual, I suggested the landowner contact the DEC service forester, soon.

FINALLY, my most recent forest owner interaction, is freshest in my memory. Interestingly, I never did see the 60 acres of forest land, but I have had the pleasure of chatting with the forest owner for several

hours (from the comfort of my living room).

We had twice set appointments to meet at her property this fall and winter, but the first one was postponed since the service forester was called away to work on a timber theft case. I opted out of the second meeting, because my kids would have given me grief for dragging them out on a cold, January morning.

But first, a little background on this visit. This landowner saw my name in the *New York Forest Owner*. (She has been a member for a while, and enjoys the Magazine!) She explained she had talked to a DEC service forester several years ago about some work the woodlot would benefit from. Now, she is eager to do the work. Great! I thought. So we talked about what she remembered from the forester's recommendations, and I suggested she contact the DEC again to set up appointment, this time with the intent to write a management plan.

She called the DEC and when I followed-up with a phone call, I could tell she was now more than a little uncertain. (Keep in mind, I am reporting what we discussed and before I go further, I will prepare you for the ultimate outcome...she ended up delighted with her meeting with the forester.) We talked about her conversation with the DEC, and her confidence was shaken. Her main concern was that she was not convinced the person

she spoke with had the interest/enthusiasm she felt a forester should express. She was not convinced the forester would do a "good job".

I took a deep breath (also as I type this) and acknowledged what I heard; then started to work through her concerns, one by one. One thing I will say, (and I know I will get grief...) many foresters are not known for their people skills. I had to work hard to find the words to convince this landowner that in spite of her impression of the forester over the phone, she should be optimistic regarding the pending visit.

The morning prior to the forester's visit, I called the landowner and had a brief chat about some of the things I anticipated the forester might discuss.

A couple days passed before I received a phone call from the now satisfied landowner. She was delighted with the forester's thoroughness and attentiveness. I couldn't help but smile with all the joy I heard in her voice.

So... let's go back to the beginning.

Each of the few woods walks I've conducted has had a different introduction and different conclusion. In all cases, I learned a great deal, met great people and witnessed the undeniable pride many forest owners have in their wood lots. I stand by that statement and bet my future visits will further support it. 🌲

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Sponsors of the MFO Program include: The Ruffed Grouse Society, New York Forest Owners Association, NYS-DEC Div. of Lands & Forests, The Robert H. Wentorf, Jr. Foundation, USDA Renewable Resources Extension Program, and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Timber Harvest Should Not Be About the Money

Silverculture vs. Silviculture

CHARLIE MOWATT

Timber harvest are often looked upon as destructive and undertaken only to produce money. The way many of our privately owned forests are harvested is destructive and, in the long run, they produce less money. Biology is ignored. The high-grading that occurs today, some in the name of diameter-limit cuts, is driven by short-term gains that ignore the long-term consequences.

High-grading a woodlot is similar to a farmer culling his dairy herd by selling the very best producing cows and trying to optimize future milk production from the remaining poorer producing cows. The long-term effect of this practice will soon put the farmer out of business.

Every entry into a woodlot should have as its goal the very opposite of high-grading. Each operation, whether a thin/harvest or a harvest designed to regenerate new trees, should direct and/or improve forest growth. This is where biology is put to work. Money is then the by-product of that operation.

Unfortunately, many woodland owners are blinded by the short-term income that high-grading can bring. Timber buyers often don't leave trees that are marginally merchantable now, but that would be better left in the forest to grow. Many landowners are being misled by timber buyers who know better. The buyers justification often is, "If I don't take the merchantable trees, someone else will." The process is exacerbated by landowners who can't wait to bank the "found money." Furthermore, high-grading is often facilitated by greedy foresters who take advantage of unknowing landowners by promising to get the "best price" for the timber. Of course foresters can get

the best price if they ignore future production by selling all of the high value trees. Oh, by the way, this method also produces the highest consulting fee for the forester.

A return to silviculture, which leaves the best trees to grow under optimum conditions, is the best long-term strategy. Identify and remove the poorer trees that will provide growing space for the better producing residual trees. Perhaps the landowner has identified other goals than timber production, but the principle still applies. Keep trees that help meet those goals and remove trees that do not. In most cases, multiple goals are identified. Landowners must relate their goals to the forester and the timber is marked to best accomplish the goals. Within geological constraints, multiple objectives can be accommodated.

Having now identified and marked the trees that will best meet a landowner's goals, a forester can advertise for bids from timber buyers. This competitive bidding optimizes dollar returns for the marked trees. Now, however, the sale is structured to enhance future growth and development of the stand of trees, rather than just high-grade of the stand by a diameter-limit cut. Future productivity of the forest will not be compromised, as when heavy cutting removes the most productive growing stock. If the forester is also separated from the perception that consultant fees are tied to how the trees are marked, so much the better. Consultant fees based on an acreage or an hourly basis, rather than a percentage of the sale revenue, go a long way toward that end.

Common questions landowners ask are: How much to cut/leave? How heavy to thin? What level of thinning

will result in optimum growth? There are biological constraints in the answers to these questions. In the extreme, removing all but one tree per acre may result in optimum growth on that one remaining tree, but much growing space will be wasted. Conversely, the crowding, and attendant competition for available light, in an unthinned stand of trees, results in slower growth of most individual trees. We thin carrots for the same reason.

Most stands of trees in the Northeast grow well when the relative density is between 65 and 90. Relative Density (RD) is a measure of the density of a stand of trees, relative to the maximum density the stand could support, given the same size range and species composition. Thinning to a point below 65, means that too much space is given to the residual trees and growing space is wasted (e.g., one tree per acre). Relative densities above 90 are too crowded and growth is restricted. Above RD 90, mortality is frequently observed due to the competition for light. One well-respected forester I know argues that the ideal range of relative densities should be 60 to 80. However, sample plots I have installed and maintained for many years, here in Cattaraugus County, indicate that any mortality in the main canopy is delayed beyond RD 90 for northern hardwoods, although some of the very suppressed understory trees may succumb before that density is reached. Your forester should be able to calculate RD targets for your woodlot.

So, maintenance of the relative density between 65 and 90 optimizes stand level production in your woodlot and periodically gives the opportunity to improve forest conditions through thinnings or harvests. If thinnings or harvests remove the poorest stems, future growth will be placed on the better ones. It's a winning combination but requires that the forest owner/manager must time the silvicultural operations toward these biological ends. Similarly, a farmer must be sure that the tomatoes are not picked in July before they have reached their peak of development.

Nor can the tomato harvest be delayed until November, when frost will kill the plants and ruin the fruit.

Concentrating on relative density does not place forestry operations on a strict schedule. There is still opportunity to adjust the timing of harvests or thinnings. But remember that a delayed harvest or thinning could result in poorer growth rates on the residual trees and a missed opportunity to direct the growth to the more desirable trees. An early harvest will result in harvesting trees before they have attained optimal growth; say nothing about trying to market skimpy volumes.

Relative density in northern hardwood stands recovers at a rate of about 1.5% to 2.0% per year. Therefore, a stand that is reduced to a relative density of 65 will grow to RD 90 in 13 to 17 years. This growth/recovery rate helps to estimate the timing of future harvests and to help place the forest

management operations on a rough time table. This time table can be adjusted within a narrow window.

Forest thin/harvest operations should not be overly delayed by market conditions. That is like trying to time the stock market. Your investment advisor tries to get you to avoid trying to time the stock market, because nobody's crystal ball is sure-fire. It is better to

avoid trying to time the timber market for the same reason. If the timber market is off this year, just wait, it may be off more the next year. Instead, reliance on biology is more predictable. ▲

Charlie Mowatt is a member of NYFOA and a MFO. He gratefully acknowledges the editorial assistance of Elmo Drilling, Dave Forness, Winnie Godfrey, Marian Mowatt and Dr. Ralph Nyland.

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Mineral Stain in Sugar Maple

DOUGLAS C. ALLEN

One of the most prevalent sources of degrade in wood products made from sugar maple and birch lumber is a discoloration called mineral stain or mineral streak. The color of this defect changes with time and varies from green to light brown early in its development to almost black as the stain ages.

What is mineral stain?

Typically, sugar maple wood is a bright, light color. Following a wound, however, living cells in wood that surrounds the injury react chemically to inhibit the establishment and growth of micro-organisms. Compounds that are the cause of mineral stain originate in living cells, but eventually they are transported into the non-functional (in terms of water conduction and nutrient storage) heartwood of certain trees. These cells, called vessels, are major constituents of the sapwood and form a pipeline that transports water from the roots to all parts of the tree. Following a wound, vessels adjacent to the injury fill with green

sand-like deposits. At some later time, micro-organisms are able to grow through this protective shield and invade living cells adjacent to the column of stain. These cells, in turn, begin to accumulate protective materials, and it is at this time that the stain begins to darken. The dying, discolored cells are flooded with moisture and minerals, especially salts of magnesium, potassium and calcium which combine with tannin to produce the stain. The mineral content of stained wood is 30% greater than in sound wood, and stained wood is denser and harder than normal. It tends to twist and warp badly when dried and splits more easily when nailed. Further, maple lumber produced from mineral-stained wood is not suitable for exposed surfaces in furniture or other wood products. This, too, greatly reduces its value.

What triggers mineral stain?

Any wound that penetrates the bark of sugar maple will initiate the chemical changes that result in mineral stain. In other words, mineral stain is a maple's reaction to physical injuries. Common sources of the latter are logging damage (Fig. 1), wood boring insects, tap holes, sapsucker sucker feeding, ice, hail, and fire scars.

Sapsuckers typically peck many small holes throughout the stem of certain maples in an attempt to locate insects, which they are able to extract with their tongue. Often these holes are closely spaced and form horizontal rows. Sap flows from the openings and eventually the bark beneath the damage is blackened by microbes



Figure 1. This pole-size sugar maple was damaged by a cable (top scar) and a skidder. When this stem reaches sawtimber size, the butt log will have substantial mineral stain.

that grow on this sugary substance. Black bark on sugar maple is a good indicator of sapsucker injury. A small streak of discolored (i.e., mineral stained) sapwood is associated with each hole. Sapsuckers typically nest in large aspens, and stands of maple and birch close by may be especially susceptible to this cause of mineral stain.

The sugar maple borer is a beetle whose immature stage feeds beneath maple bark (Fig. 2), and eventually it penetrates the sapwood for 3 to 4 inches to over-winter in a specially constructed gallery 3 to 5 inches long (Fig. 3). This gallery or tunnel is a major cause of mineral stain in lumber produced from infested logs (Fig. 4).

Mineral stain is also commonly associated with branch stubs that heal slowly and allow microbes to penetrate the sapwood (Fig. 5). When stain penetrates the center of the tree stem it often is referred to as "black heart" in maple. Generally, branch stubs heal quickly and cleanly. When the healing process is slow or tissue around the base of a broken stub is injured, however, micro-organisms are able to penetrate the wood. When this happens,



Figure 2. Maple borer scar. The feeding gallery is evident on the surface of the exposed sapwood in the center of the scar. Mineral stain will extend a substantial distance above and below this scar.



Figure 3. An over-wintering gallery of maple borer and associated mineral stain. The latter is indicated by the dark-colored wood surrounding the gallery. The arrow indicates the orientation of the log.

the tree responds by initiating the chemical defenses that result in mineral stain.

What can the forest owner do to reduce mineral stain in maple?

As with many forest health issues, maintaining a healthy, vigorous stand will minimize lumber degrade associated with mineral stain. Adjusting stand density will properly allocate growing space and, therefore, enhance stand vigor which, in turn, facilitates quick healing of wounds. Appropriate spacing also will discourage the growth of large branches on lower parts of the stem. Where these branches occur, they leave large stubs when they die. The resulting wound heals slowly,

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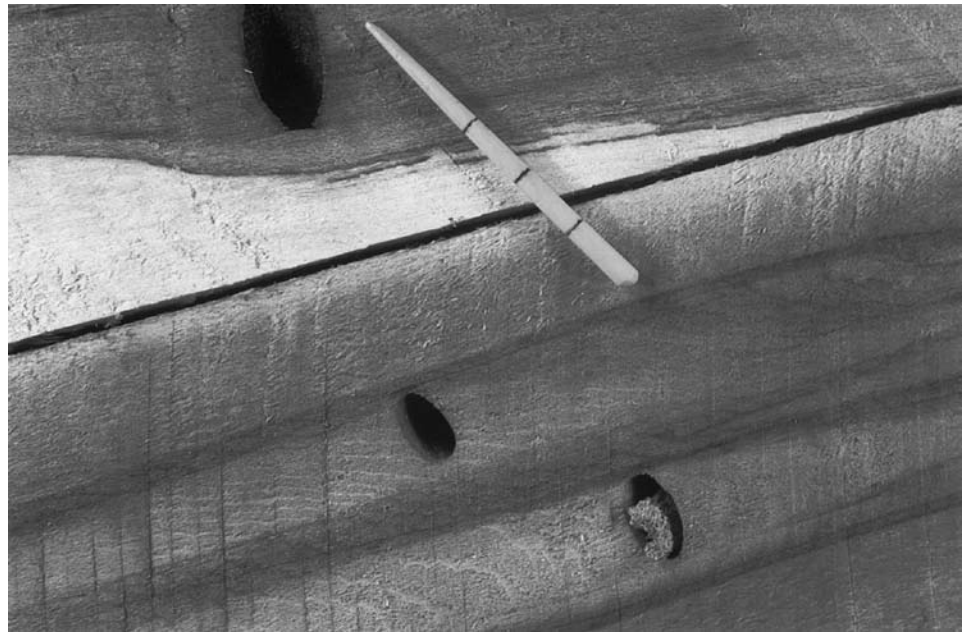


Figure 4. Two pieces of sugar maple lumber with extensive mineral stain. The holes are cross-sections of borer galleries. Both pieces of wood should be white like the narrow strip in the top board.

often resulting in large cores of mineral stain.

When implementing silvicultural treatments, an effort should be made to damage the residual stand as little as possible. Stems that are scraped by skidders, cables, etc., might as well be removed at the end of the operation. These trees will survive but most likely the resulting lumber will possess mineral stain in what should be the most valuable part of the tree from a lumber standpoint. Unless their retention is needed to maintain a desired stand density, it does not make sense to give these individuals future growing space.

Evidence suggests that maple borer damage is concentrated on stressed trees; mainly those residing in lower crown levels. These borer-damaged trees should be removed when a stand is thinned. Like trees with logging damage, borer damaged individuals will survive, but most likely they will have low value due to extensive mineral stain and other defects. The completed gallery system of a maple borer, and its accompanying stain, may affect as much as 4 to 5 feet of a sugar maple's butt log.

This is the 92nd in the series of articles contributed by Dr. Allen, Professor of Entomology at SUNY-ESF. It is possible to download this

collection from the NYS DEC Web page at: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/priv-land/forprot/health/nyfo/index.html>.

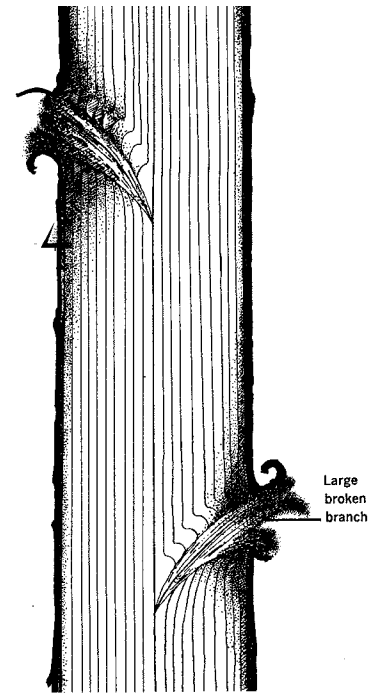


Figure 5. The discolored (shaded) areas above and below each broken branch stub in this diagram are caused by mineral stain. The stain will enlarge as microbes penetrate the sapwood. This figure was taken from USDA Forest Service Agric. Inform. Bull. No. 405.

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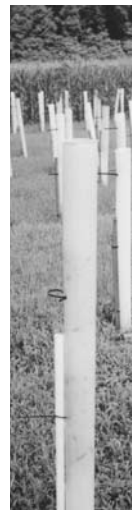
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Member Profile: *Bruce Robinson*

ALEXANDRA SILVA

Having always had an interest in wildlife, Bruce Robinson thoroughly enjoyed his most recent vacation, which he took with his wife, JoAnn and son Bruce. With a special interest in birds, including international species, the Robinson's spent seven weeks camping in southern Africa bird watching. Overall, the six-country visit allowed the Robinson's to spot four hundred fifty-two birds that they had never before seen. Prior visits to Australia also produced favorite places and similar numbers of new sightings.

At home in New York, Bruce previously served as president of the Jamestown Audubon Society and was actively involved in developing the Nannen Arboretum in Ellicottville, in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Reflecting his multiple interests in forestry and wildlife, Bruce is also a member of the International Society of Arboriculture, the Society of American Foresters

and the American Forestry Institute. In addition, he is a member of NYFOA and regularly gives lectures or leads woods walks at landowner workshops. Birds and forest structure and looking at the forest from wildlife perspectives are favorite topics.

According to Bruce, his first memory having to do with forestry took place at age six, while on a walk with his mother. During the walk they found a little red cedar sapling that they dug up and took home to transplant. More than just a lifelong interest, however, Bruce considers forestry to be in his blood.

After graduating from Paul Smith's college in 1966, Bruce studied forestry and forest zoology in Syracuse. Bruce then went on to work as a forester for the DEC for fourteen years. In 1984, he took a part-time job in a Jamestown church, and began filling his spare time as a forestry consultant. He was quickly overwhelmed with consulting work and

created Bruce E. Robinson Inc. as a result. With over 100,000 acres to manage between New York and Pennsylvania, the company employs three foresters and two technicians. One of the staff is also an arborist and helps implement the tree program for the city of Warren. With a high level of interest in urban forestry and community forestry projects, the business has developed management plans for fourteen communities in NY and PA. Bruce co-authored the management plan for 7000 acres owned by city of Rochester. This undeveloped property surrounds Hemlock and Canadice lakes, the two smallest Finger Lakes.

Married since 1974, Bruce and JoAnn own the business together. Their two children, Bruce and April, are both involved in the business as well. Bruce is one of the forest technicians, while April manages the office with JoAnn. Together with April's three children, Hannah, Erika and Jaden, the family spends time camping, gathering home-heating firewood, and riding their John Deere Gator around their property in the town of Randolph.

Totaling one-hundred and eighty-three acres, the area had a 14 year management history by Bruce for a client, who then sold the land to the Robinson's. During the 1940's, the property was badly abused and severely high-graded by a lumber company of short-term ownership. Since the Robinson's have owned the property, harvests have reversed the degrading trends and developed an excellent trail system on the property. On two occasions, the Robinson's have hosted NYFOA visitors, who were taken around on tractor and wagon along several miles worth of trails.

Bruce has had the property harvested at least three times since 1970. For timber sales, Bruce removes no more than 1/3 of the basal area, but harvests from all species and sizes. By always removing the worst third first, as in reverse high-grading, Bruce ensures that the average and worst third of the property is always better for the next timber sale. However, there is one unique five-acre parcel of land that is primarily red oak,



Bruce Robinson leading a NYFOA woods walk in August of 2007.

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Current photograph of the Robinson's home woodlot, which is used to heat their home. Thirty-five years previously, the area was a brushy horse pasture.

hemlock and white pine which is kept as a wildlife sanctuary and not harvested. The Robinson's monitor this portion of the property for nesting birds, especially those not common to the area. Nesting Hermit Thrushes, which normally migrate north, have been staying on the property, indicating quality habitat for wildlife.

The Randolph property is in limited partnership with the other family members, which allows Bruce and JoAnn to pass along the property little by little, yet continue to oversee the management. Properties under limited partnership are becoming more common, particularly in NY where land taxes are high. Accord-



Bruce and JoAnn overlooking Klipspringer Pass in the Karoo National Park of South Africa.

ing to Bruce, taxes are the worst cause of forest loss, because they affect the land owner's decision to cut severely or even to subdivide to pay taxes.

Similar to the Randolph property, the Robinson's bought another property near Gerry in 1998, which they had previously managed for a different landowner. The ninety-seven acre property, however, has soil more typical of Chautauqua County and so must be managed differently. With poorly drained land and no gravel due to the glaciers, species like tulip poplar, white ash and red maple are more common, rather than black cherry, red oak and sugar maple on the Randolph property. At the moment, the Robinson's are still developing a trail system, and have not yet hosted any woods walks there.

Approximately 11 miles from the Randolph property, Bruce and JoAnn have another eight acres of woods where they live. When they purchased the property, there was only one big birch tree in front of the house. The rest was a mowed field used for hay, with the exception of a small block of forest at the eastern end. Now, 34 years later, the property is an arboretum with eighty species of trees. The residential property has a small, young sugar maple forest. There is a mixed forest area with tulip poplar and hickories. Over

this past summer, for a NYFOA woods walk, Bruce demonstrated the results of diverse activities one can do with a small property.

Overall, the residential property is managed primarily for wildlife. Over the years Bruce has tried to increase wildlife use of his property by increasing the density of the undergrowth. Now that the property is no longer just a field, the Robinson's regularly see many different species of birds, including those that require dense cover for nesting. By retaining some large, but low quality trees, Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-headed Woodpeckers and Red-breasted Nuthatches are all regular guests on the Robinson property.

Alexandra Silva is a Forest Resources Extension Program Assistant at Cornell University, Department of Natural Resources, Ithaca, NY 14853.

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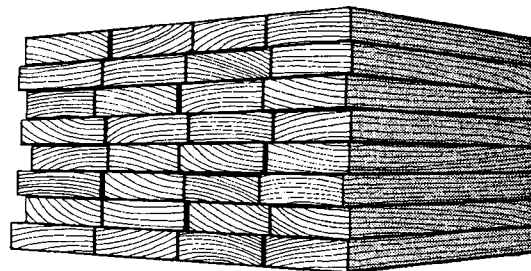
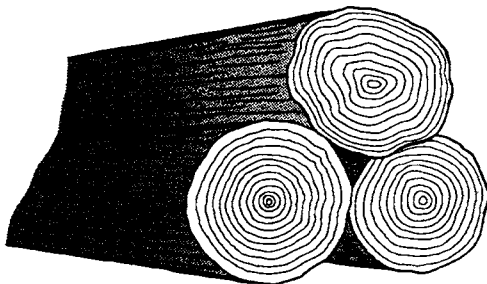
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